

Indiana Secretary of State Expresses Concern Over Legislation Prohibiting States From Implementing Necessary Safeguards to Prevent Vote Fraud; Says Legislation will Weaken Integrity of Nation's Election Process

WASHINGTON - Today, Indiana Secretary of State Todd Rokita warned members of the Subcommittee on Elections about the "easily cheatable reforms" included in H.R. 1719, introduced by Subcommittee Chair Representative Zoe Lofgren, D-Calif. According to Rokita, Lofgren's bill - the Voter Registration Modernization Act of 2009 - prohibits states from implementing safeguards to protect against the widespread and fraudulent ACORN-style registration tactics witnessed during the 2008 Primary Election.

At today's hearing on modernizing states' election registration procedures, the Indiana Secretary of State expressed strong support for providing voters with online registration services - similar to those currently being implemented in Indiana. However, he also explained how the mandatory provisions included in H.R. 1719 would negate state verification safeguards designed to avert fraudulent registrations. Specifically, Rokita criticized a provision included in the legislation that would prohibit a state from verifying an individual's identity and eligibility to vote. "If this provision is not eliminated, fraudulent applications such as those submitted in the spring of 2008, would be added to the voter rolls - permitting a fictitious 'Jimmy John' or 'Mickey Mouse' to vote," Rokita warned.

The Subcommittee's Ranking Member, **Rep. Kevin McCarthy, R-Calif.**, reiterated concerns over the legislation's provisions that would facilitate fraudulent registration practices. "We should provide states with incentives - not mandates - to improve and modernize voting procedures through the use of technology, but we must not impede a state's ability to enforce necessary safeguards that help prevent fraud," he noted. "With the recent and overwhelming

onslaught of reports and criminal investigations involving registration fraud, how could we possibly consider legislation that would force state election officials to open the door to even more fraud?"

"The right to vote and to elect our leaders is one of America's most important and fundamental freedoms," added Subcommittee member **Rep. Gregg Harper, R-Miss.** "While implementing new technologies to expand voter services, Congress should seek ways to strengthen our elections process by supplying states with the necessary resources to detect and prevent fraud. Appropriate registration procedures and voter fraud prevention will ensure a fair and just elections process for the states and for our country."

For more information, please contact the Committee press office at (202) 225-8281.